PLAYER TO SPECTATOR HANDOFF AND OTHER SPECTATOR CONTROLS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0001]   Aspects of the subject technology relate to management of online gaming leagues, and in particular, to an online platform for automatically managing player rankings in a developer or player initiated online gaming competition.

Description of the Related Art

[0002]   A video game is an electronic game in which a player interacts with a user interface coupled to a computing device, causing the computing device to generate visual feedback via a video device such as a television screen or computer monitor. The user interface for a video game may be, for example, an arcade joystick, a video game console controller, a computer keyboard, a computer mouse, a touchscreen display.

[0003]   Some video games feature competitive or cooperative multi-player gameplay, meaning that multiple players play the same game simultaneously in a competitive or cooperative fashion, usually with each player having their own user interface. During "local" multiplayer, user interfaces for different players all connect to a single computing device. During local area network (LAN) multiplayer or online multiplayer, user interfaces for different players instead connect to different computing devices that then communicate with each other via a LAN or the internet.

[0004]   In the same way that many sports fans enjoy watching sports games involving professional or amateur sports players both to learn sports techniques and to share a sense of community, many video game fans enjoy watching professional or amateur video game players both to learn video game techniques and to share a similar sense of community. Before the Internet, video game fans could watch a video game player play by being in the physical vicinity of the video game player and physically watching the video game player and the screen, such as at a friend's house, at an arcade, or at a video game competition.

[0005]   More recently, some video games with network connectivity have been developed with an integrated "spectator" functionality in the game's code, allowing users with copies of the video game to watch live gameplay without actually playing or influencing the outcome of the game by receiving some of the same data from the game's servers that the players receive. Additionally, video streaming services such as Twitch® allow a video game player to record video content of themselves playing a video game that need not be developed with an integrated "spectator" functionality in the game's code, and to stream the video content live to spectators.

[0006]   However, while a video game player at a traditional arcade might be able to physically step away from an arcade machine at which he/she is playing and hand the game controls off to his/her previously-spectating friend to take over control of gameplay mid-game, neither of these network-based video game spectating technologies offer any way to hand off control between a player and a spectator. Additionally, while sports players playing a game in a sports stadium might be encouraged or discouraged by cheers, chants, boos, or jeers of sports spectators sitting in the stadium in earshot of the players, network-based video game spectators are typically silent and invisible, both to each other and to video game players. Thus, neither players nor spectators of network-based video games feel the same kind of sense of community, common goal, or scale of fanbase that sports players and sports spectators in a crowded sports arena do. Furthermore, while fantasy leagues for a variety of sports are now widely available, comparable leagues for fans/spectators of network-based video games are not readily available.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007]   FIG. 1 illustrates an example of a network environment in which some aspects of the technology can be implemented.

[0008]   FIG. 2 illustrates a network-based video game environment involving different types of client computing devices.

[0009]   FIG. 3 is a flow diagram illustrating server network operations for automatically switching player and spectator roles in response to a trigger event.

[0010]   FIG. 4A is a flow diagram illustrating server network operations for automatically generating cheering or chanting during gameplay based on inputs from game spectators.

[0011]   FIG. 4B is a flow diagram illustrating server network operations for automatically generating booing or jeering during gameplay based on inputs from game spectators.

[0012]   FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating spectator operations for customized spectating experience.

[0013]   FIG. 6 is a block diagram of an exemplary computing device that may be used to implement some aspects of the subject technology.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0014]   In the same way that many sports fans enjoy watching sports games involving professional or amateur sports players both to learn sports techniques and to share a sense of community, many video game fans enjoy watching professional or amateur video game players both to learn video game techniques and to share a similar sense of community. Competitive gaming, sometimes referred to as electronic sports or "eSports," involves the play of video games in a competitive environment comparable to traditional sports.

[0015]   During competitive gaming involving single-player games, players sometimes compete to achieve a high score, or to achieve a particular goal within the video game in a record time, sometimes referred to as a "speed run." During competitive gaming involving multi-player games, players sometimes likewise compete for best scores or times, but are also sometimes ranked against each other based on numbers of wins and/or losses against one another, or other statistics, often based on multiple game "matches" spread out over time, sometimes in a tournament style.

[0016]   Competitive gaming includes localized video game competitions that take place in a particular physical location, in which case spectators may be in the physical vicinity of the players. Competitive gaming also includes virtual video game competitions with a more virtual organization structure conducted online or over local area networks (LAN), where gameplay footage may be distributed to spectators via